



# WorkFirst Forward Q & A

(July 17, 2007)

Topic	Submitted	Question	Answer
Actual Hours	6/19/2007	Will DSHS get credit for a parent who has participated in their final month of TANF benefits, since the client monthly participation is not accessible after closure? Contractors or DSHS will not be able to report on the month if the case is closed, correct?	If parents were in a countable component through their paid through date, users will be able to go in and report on those months for two months post-termination.
		If a case is flagged as NSA, will the reporting of actual hours via the WorkFirst Participation Verification Form have an extended timeframe for returning the form? Will it still be required to be returned by the 5th of each month?	The form must still be returned by the 5 <sup>th</sup> of each month. If the parent is NSA, you may want to send the forms directly to the provider and ask the provider to return the completed form by the 5 <sup>th</sup> of each month.
	6/20/2007	If a student has a doctors appointment, WIC appointment, etc, and they bring in a doctors note the next day, are they excused only for the time they were actually at the doctors office or all day?	The parent should clarify how many hours they will be gone with the instructor/provider when they call in for the excused absence and held to that arrangement unless something else pops up. If, for example, the arrangement is to be absent for the morning and they don't show up at all, and they don't have a good reason for not showing up that afternoon, just excuse them for the morning and the afternoon is unexcused.
	6/21/2007	After inputting actual hours data in eJAS, where do we document? Do we record under a special note type?	The eJAS entries are sufficient and you do not need to document the actual hours date again under eJAS notes. The documentation that supports the eJAS entries (such as the WorkFirst Participation Verification form or timesheets) need to be retained for audits. DSHS staff can use the DMS system to retain a copy of the documentation in our permanent records. Other partners or contractors may store the paperwork in their files.
	6/25/2007	Can ESD field staff see ACES?	No. ESD field staff has no access to ACES.
	6/27/2007	What month will actual hrs begin with?	ESD began entering actual hours in June and other WorkFirst partners and contractors in July. DSHS staff must enter actual hours of participation during July by August 31.
		The number of unexcused absences does not show. How can the user see how many times the parent have been unexcused?	We only display the number of hours the parent has been out due to an unexcused absence. If possible, try to arrange for the parent to make up these hours by the end of the month. Once the month is over, the parent cannot make up the hours.
	6/28/2007	Do we code actual hours for 16 & 17 year olds that are in High School?	It will be required in a few cases when the 16 or 17 year old is <u>a mandatory WorkFirst participant</u> . eJAS has been programmed to display the name on your actual hours screens when actual hours are required.



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		<p>If someone is in a fellowship at the University for 31 hours and we are currently counting it in eJAS as FT, participation and the income is counted on the UNER screen in ACES--not the EARN screen. How will this count in eJAS? eJAS is only picking up information that is on the EARN screen correct?</p>	<p>Yes. eJAS is only picking up information that is on the ACES EARN screen. According to the treatment of income chart, fellowships with work requirements should be budgeted as earned income for Basic Food and cash, so enter the wage information on the EARN screen.  <a href="http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/esa/eazmanual/Sections/INCMtreat_chart.htm">http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/esa/eazmanual/Sections/INCMtreat_chart.htm</a></p>
<b>Actual Hours (cont.)</b>	06/29/2007	<p>If we have a 18 yr old that is attending high school, are we required to report actual hours? If so, What do we use to verify hours and is the verification required monthly?</p>	<p>If you are required to enter actual hours, the 18 year old's name will appear on your eJAS actual hours screens. Use the WorkFirst Participation Verification form to verify the hours each month.</p>
	07/03/2007	<p>Are contracted DV advocates required to enter actual hours in ejas or do they provide DSHS with a WF Participation Verification Form and DSHS enters actual hours? If so, do we need to put a contractor code on the component?</p>	<p>DV advocates are required to return a completed WorkFirst Participation Verification form so that DSHS staff can enter the actual hours into eJAS. DSHS staff should enter DSHS responsibility dates for the XF code so the parent's name shows up on their actual hours screens.</p>
	07/05/2007	<p>The handbook addresses the DSHS responsibility for actual hours coding of eJAS before a CJ start date, and the handbook requires DSHS WFPS to add additional hours of education or training to the component screen when the CJ contractor identifies the activity. However, eJAS is programmed to again require the WFPS to identify actual hours responsibility coding from the start date to the begin date of the education or training activity. The handbook identifies this period as the responsibility of the CJ contractor. How do we code the DSHS responsibility screen with no DSHS responsibility in this case?</p>	<p>Make the education or training eJAS component code start date match the CJ start date and put it under the CJ provider's contractor code. The CJ provider will then be responsible (and able) to report participation in education or training that occurs while the person is in CJ. You will, however, need to enter the DSHS responsibility dates from the component scheduled start date to the day before the CJ/E&amp;T start date and enter zero hours.</p>
	07/06/2007	<p>If a non-contracted provider charges a fee for completing a WF Participation Verification form, will we pay for these? If so, do we use support services?</p>	<p>No, we do not pay for these under current policy and have not budgeted for this type of expense. Let your region office know if there are a lot of providers who will not complete the form without payment. If there is a sufficient need statewide, we can determine cost impacts and consider a policy change.</p>
		<p>DRA limits excused absences to 10 per year. What actions need to be taken when a person reaches 10 excused absences per year?</p>	<p>None, as it is our policy to provide excused absences whenever a parent has a good reason to miss activities and lets us know as soon as they can. Continue to approve excused absences, document them in eJAS, and ask the parent to make up the hours when possible. HQ will decide when to claim any given excused absence in our federal report.</p>



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		<p>Parent was to attend a 6 hour day session and they were excused for the first hour for child's appt attended until the last hour and was excused for an appt of their own. Would this be 2 instances and 2 hours or because it was all in the same day would it be 1 instance and 2 hours? What if it was 2 different providers in one day and the hours were excused, would that make a difference in the instances?</p>	<p>An instance equals a day, so in your example the parent was absent 2 hours and 1 instance because both absences were on the same day. Each provider enters their own hours and instances, so if the parent missed the first hour with one provider and the last hour with another, both providers would enter 1 hour and 1 instance.</p>
Actual Hours (cont.)	07/12/2007	<p>If a parent does make up absences, and the hours are entered into eJAS under actual hours of participation, will the instance be removed? Or will this still remain in the record? The concern is, if the time is made up, would we still take the hit for the instances--especially if they were approaching the number of 10 per year?</p>	Assigned
		<p>If the form is not received back from a provider for a countable core or non-core activity, but we verify the information over the phone or via e-mail regarding the # of hours of participation, can we still enter in the actual hours? The handbook indicates that the worker would enter in zero hours into eJAS if we cannot obtain actual participation hour documentation from the provider. The trainer script reads that if the form (WorkFirst Verification Form) is not received that staff would enter in zero hours even if we have other info that the parent participated. Please clarify.</p>	Assigned
		<p>If a parent is in a countable X code for activities less than 1 hour per week, do we enter in this information into the actual hours screen?</p>	Assigned
		<p>The WorkFirst Verification form does not ask about absences, but if the provider indicates that the parent is participating but then lists that the parent has missed some absences do we enter the absences into the system? Since this is a non-contracted activity the provider isn't required to let us know if they have an unexcused absence. However, if the parent doesn't let their worker know do we assume it is unexcused or excused if we are required to enter this into the actual hours screen?</p>	Assigned
		<p>How do parents make up hours of</p>	Assigned



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		participation that was missed with a non-contracted provider?	
	07/16/2007	Can we use the ICMS treatment verification forms to track WorkFirst Participation instead of the WF Verification form? The ICMS will allow you to print from central office with the return letter for multiple clients very easily.	Assigned
	07/17/2007	If the employment hours in ACES differ from those listed in EJAS, how will the WFPS/SW notified?	Assigned
<b>CTED Programs</b>	6/21/2007	How does the "HOLD" affect "excused absences" or does it?	A "HOLD" and an "excused absence" are two separate actions that may occur at the same time. With a "HOLD" situation, DSHS needs to close the component as the parent would be unable to work or participate during that time. When the issue was resolved, DSHS would re-refer the parent back to the program to resume and complete it. The contractor has the reporting responsibility for entering any excused absences that occur up to the component end date for the activity.
	6/27/2007	Who is responsible for providing educational services during break times for CJ parents? Is it the contractor or the college? If not the college the parent is rb'd by whom?	The 'school break' issue will not affect us until November, so there is time to get a process and policy in place before then. For example, we may be able to modify the IRP template and create a referral process where an RB and new IRP are not required. We will be determining who needs to be in countable activities during school breaks and what those activities might be.
	6/29/2007	Can the monthly reporting (in ejas) take the place of the other procedures for billing pay-points for CTED supported work?	The billing process is detailed in the Supported Work Programs Scope of Work. Actual Hours must be reported for all work components based on timesheets: this will count as "participation". Monthly worksite evaluations must be entered into case notes; this will count as "progression". These two entries satisfy the billing requirements for the monthly participation/progression pay points.
<b>Contractors Issues</b>	6/21/2007	What is the definition of accept/reject? Right now, contractors accept all referral and after orientation report show/no show. Should they be doing that differently now?	Contractors have had the option to electronically reject referrals for the past few years and may do so when they have a good reason not to work with a parent. Follow your agency's procedures to determine when or if they would require you to use this option.
	6/27/2007	Will contractors be able to sort by	Yes. We are building this functionality into the



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		component from their caseload management report?	new Caseload Management Report.
<b>Education and Training</b>	6/19/2007	How can we verify study time for a parent attending a private school?	As with any education and training activity, study time has to be supervised. Personnel from the private schools will either have to send in the documentation verifying the study time or sign documentation that is then submitted by the student.
	7/03/2007	Who do we call to get help actually entering info into ejas? specifically, actual hours? who is the ejas contact?	Waiting for approval
	7/05/2007	How do I enter hours of participation for an online class?	Waiting for approval
		Do internet classes count towards participation hours? If so, where is written documentation of that? And how do we track the participation?	Waiting for approval
	07/11/2007	In Kitsap County we are still using referrals codes such as RA to the colleges. Are we just supposed to be inputting the actual component code such as VE, JT, etc?	Waiting for approval
<b>eJAS</b>	6/27/2007	Come July 1st, if we have questions about eJAS changes, who do we need to contact for help?	You can call the Central Support Helpdesk @360-664-4560 with eJAS technology related questions.
	06/29/2007	Once non-participation has been noted and the checkbox checked, it grays out. When will the contractor be able to enter in that non-participation box again?	"The non-participation box is intended as a once-a-month report and notifies DSHS that there is a participation problem that requires immediate follow up." There should no longer be participating/progressing buttons in eJAS although we did add a "progress yes or no" button on the actual hours screen for BE, HS and GE only.
<b>FLSA</b>	6/19/2007	What do we do if FLSA hours fluctuate? Do we need to update the IRP each time? How will we know when it changes automatically from ACES to eJAS? Will there be an alert of some kind in eJAS	The CLMR will alert staff when FLSA hours fluctuate and the most recent hours will be displayed on the eJAS screens themselves. The IRP template does not list how many hours are specifically required so the IRP will not need to be modified each time the hours change. The FLSA hours for the upcoming month will be 'frozen' at the issuance deadline, so staff will always have a few days notice before the next month's hours, with a new FLSA maximum, goes into effect.
	07/06/2007	We have a two-parent household, both participating in CTED work programs. The FLSA calculation is 27 hours for June. Dad moves out of the home and	Beginning the first of the next month. Monthly FLSA maximum hours are set for the upcoming month at monthly issuance. Once the monthly FLSA maximum hours are set, we



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		new calculation for one parent is 20 hours. When does the new hours calculation take affect? Immediately or beginning of the next month?	do not modify them.
Job Search	6/21/2007	Is the automatic RB going away?	Yes, effective 6/25/07 the automatic RB was discontinued. Staff will monitor participation and refer parents back if necessary.
		Will the Job Search Daily Planning Log be translated into other languages?	Essential public services are ideally to be provided in the parent's primary language. We are looking into accomplishing this between central office and field offices.
		How is self directed job search counted and can it be reported as participation?	Self directed job search is countable for the hours the parent reports on their Activity/Job Search Log. Parents record their activities daily and meet with staff weekly. Staff will then determine hours of participation to report.
	06/29/2007	Does job search travel time count as participation?	For specific detail on how travel time is counted please refer to the WorkFirst Handbook Chapter 4.2 Job Preparation/Job Search, <u>4.2.11</u> <i>How are actual hours of participation figured?</i>
LEP Pathway	6/21/2007	Is it necessary to have ES component along with LP? Basically I've got LP alone.	Yes, it is necessary to have the <b>ES</b> component along with the <b>LP</b> . The <b>LP</b> component is an indicator code and a contractor cannot accept or reject based off of it. The DSHS worker's IRP template is located under the <b>LP</b> component code. The <b>ES</b> component code is opened initially for 10 days to allow the contractor the ability to accept or reject based on the results of the CASAS test. And also so <b>JS</b> time is not used. For LEP Pathway parents, DSHS should be referring using both the <b>LP</b> indicator code and <b>ES</b> component code.
	6/27/2007	Will LEP parents need referral dates to LP codes? Does it need to be coded with ES and the LP contractor code?	Yes, parents need referral dates entered on the <b>LP</b> codes. Yes, the <b>ES</b> and <b>LP</b> codes must include contractor codes. See above answer dated 6/21/2007.
Participation Rate	6/25/2007	What is the amount of funding WA state could lose if we don't make the participation rate?	It is important to keep in mind that the following figures are <b>estimates</b> only. States need to make two participation rates: the all-family rate and the two-parent rate. The penalties change based on whether the State misses one or the other participation rate. If Washington failed to meet the two-parent rate, we would lose about \$1 million dollars the first year. If we also failed to meet





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			<p>the all family rate, we would lose about \$13.4 million.</p> <p>The federal penalties go up by 2% a year when states continue to fail to meet the rate. Washington would receive the maximum penalty if we failed to meet the all-family rate for 9 years in a row. The penalty for that would be about \$56 million, which is 21% of our federal block grant.</p> <p><b>These figures are <u>estimates</u> only.</b></p>
<b>WorkFirst Career Services Program (CSP)</b>	6/19/2007	<p>Is there a system in place to verify if someone has received Career Services Payments? For instance, if a parent reapplies for TANF benefits, can we check someplace to verify what amount would need to be budgeted or even if someone is enrolled in the program?</p> <p>The chapter listed above indicates that ESD will receive an alert that TANF is re-opened, but will DSHS receive or be able to easily view if someone has received payments that need to be budgeted for benefits in the month of application?</p>	<p>There will not be an automated system or a list for DSHS staff to use to verify if someone has received Career Services payments. If a parent reapplies for TANF / SFA benefits, then the parent is responsible to self disclose their income. If the worker notices that the family recently exited TANF / SFA, then the worker may want to ask about the Career Services program.</p>
		<p>Will WCCC be authorized for parents who participate in Career Services meetings @ WorkSource—outside of regular business hours? Or will parents be able to bring their children during the face to face contacts with WorkSource?</p> <p>This is an important concern in the marketing of this program to our parents.</p>	<p>No, WCCC will not be authorized to parents who participate in Career Services meetings at WorkSource. However, parents who are working and meet eligibility factors may receive WCCC. Parents are able to take their children to WorkSource; however, it is recommended by ESD, that if possible, when parents meet with an employment counselor, they do not bring their children.</p>
	6/21/2007	<p>If a parent is terminated from Career Services and reapplies for TANF, how will the application worker know they were or are receiving career services? Do we rely on the client to inform us at application?</p>	<p>Yes, we rely on the applicant to inform us about their income (including their Career Services payments). There will not be an automated system or a list for DSHS staff to use to verify if someone has received Career Services payments. If a parent reapplies for TANF / SFA benefits, then they are responsible to self disclose their income. If a worker notices that the family recently exited TANF / SFA, then the worker may want to ask about the Career Services program.</p>
		<p>If a parent is in TPL sanction, can he/she qualify for this program?</p>	<p>No. WAC explains that a person who left TANF / SFA in sanction status is not eligible for the WorkFirst Career Services program.</p>
		<p>What are the criteria for proof of number of participation hours?</p>	<p>The working parent must work 30 hours or more to be eligible for Career Services Program. As a RIA contractor you will not be</p>



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			documenting participation hours for this service.
		Are parents on RCA (Refugee Cash Assistance) eligible for the Career Services program if they obtain 30 hours of employment and their RCA closes?	No. A person must have left TANF or SFA.
		Are parents in an OJT eligible for Career Services?	No. WAC explains that a person must be in a paid unsubsidized job. OJT's are subsidized, and therefore, a person would not be eligible. However, if the OJT changes into an unsubsidized job within two months of TANF / SFA exit, then the person may be eligible for Career Services.
6/25/2007		Are the Basic Needs and Bonus payments taxable income?	No. They are needs-based payments made from state funds. They (like TANF assistance) are not subject to taxation.
6/27/2007		In the Career Services Program, can the 30 hours/week count if the parent is working more than one job where the combined hours total 30 or more or do the hours have to be from one job?	Yes. WAC explains that the individual must be working 30 hours or more per week. The hours do not have to come from one employment source.
6/28/2007		If there are two parents who are eligible for the program can one of them bring in the information for the other parent to become enrolled or to participate? Or does each parent have to enroll on their own?	Each parent will need to come in person to enroll. This allows staff to verify each enrollment and individualize the services being provided.
		How long will it take to enroll the parent? Will the parent be able to walk in and enroll on the spot? Or will there be a wait time? In marketing this idea, we wanted to be able to provide parents with a time frame.	While the program may vary from site to site and there is no history to draw from, parents should plan on spending about 30 minutes with an employment counselor. Also depending on the number of customers to be served in the WorkSource Center, there may be a short wait required. Some offices will provide appointments. Local coordination will help educate staff on specifically how this is working in their area.
		When TFA ends, can we budget the \$50.00 payment that is received in the 6th month of Career Services as a one-time payment?	No, the Career Services payment cannot be coded as a one-time payment. Therefore, when budgeting the \$50 WF Career Services benefits, make certain to note an end date and track the WFCS income. The income will need to be removed once the household has been off TANF / SFA for six-months and their WFCS benefits have ended.
		At times our parents are employed by employers who only provide a gross wage stub. There is no tax information with the check. This happens a lot with the LEP pathway. Will ESD accept this as verification of employment?	ESD will review the employment verification and make a case by case decision. Self employed parents may qualify if they work at least 30 hours per week and, after business expenses, earn at least minimum wage. Note that the 30 hours weekly work





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		And...What about self employment? Does the 30 hour requirement need to be at least minimum wage?	requirement is less than the 32 hours required for self employment as defined in the WorkFirst Handbook, section 8.2.
	06/29/2007	If a parent TANF grant closes on May 31, 2007 are they eligible for WFCS in July?	No. Parents who exited TANF in June will be the first monthly cohort eligible to apply for Career Services.
	07/10/2007	Chapter 4.5.6 of the WF Handbook states, "Employment hours are verified by DSHS at the time of exit and recorded in ACES." Does this mean that DSHS staff will always need to request income verification to verify employment of 30 hours or more at time of exit?  What is the process for DSHS staff if a household does not provide the verification?	DSHS staff responsibilities for verifying employment and recording the information in ACES has not changed because of implementation of Career Services. Staff should follow policy and procedures for verifying employment and documentation in ACES.
	07/16/2007	The materials indicate that the parent can not leave WF Cash/SFA in sanction status. To clarify, does this include DCS sanction? During Train the Trainer I thought it was presented as ANY sanction which would include DCS sanction. If the response is still yes, then how would ESD know if the parent was in DCS sanction?	Assigned